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**Subject:** FW: Sportfishing Industry Commends America's Great Outdoors Initiative  
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Nice work Gordon and Mike but I guarantee you that the NPS will not even acknowledge this initiative much less be open minded with the public. As far as access, who do they think they are kidding? Taking kids fishing and helping to promote access for them, not this NPS by this administration.

Bob Eakes

**From:** American Sportfishing Association [mailto:ASAComm@asafishing.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 18, 2011 4:53 PM  
**To:** fish@reddrumtackle.com  
**Subject:** Sportfishing Industry Commends America's Great Outdoors Initiative



For Immediate Release  
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**Sportfishing Industry Commends America's Great Outdoors Initiative**

*Sportfishing community supports the Administrations' efforts to conserve, restore and provide better access to our nation's open spaces for Americans of all ages*

**Alexandria, VA** – February 18, 2011 – The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) commends the Obama administration for launching the *America's Great Outdoors Initiative* (AGO) outlined in the final report, *America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations*, released this week. The initiative was established by President Obama in April 2010 to develop a 21st century agenda for resource conservation and reconnecting Americans, especially children, to our nation's outdoors. The report addresses many goals important to the sportfishing industry and the recreational fishing community. ASA submitted extensive comments, many of which are addressed in the final report.

"One of ASA's major requests was for increased opportunity for anglers to participate in federal management decisions that could impact sportfishing in the U.S.," said ASA Vice President Gordon Robertson, who attended the AGO announcement ceremony at the White House. "This administration has continually said that it is determined to work hand-in-hand with sportsmen and women on this initiative, and we are pleased that many of our community's suggestions are reflected in the final document."

The AGO report stresses the importance of federal partnerships with state and local

governments in the restoration and conservation of waterways, making specific mention of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP). The NFHAP aims to better protect, restore and enhance fish habitat through partnerships that foster conservation and outdoor opportunities for the American public.

"ASA and its partners have worked relentlessly to establish a permanent funding source for the NFHAP through legislative and administrative means and we appreciate the President's recognition of this valuable conservation program," said Robertson.

In addition to supporting restoration projects that will improve the health of our nation's fisheries, *America's Great Outdoors Initiative* focuses on access, a significant, and growing, threat to recreational fishing. "The AGO addresses the growing problem of access restrictions," stated Robertson. "It highlights the importance of public access to public resources and supports important programs such as the Voluntary Public Access Program which expands public access and promotes fish and wildlife habitat conservation by offering incentives to private land owners. In a time when access closures are causing one in five anglers to cancel trips or stop fishing completely, programs like this are becoming increasingly important to the community."

"Though the Administration has embraced many of the industry's recommendations in this document, we are concerned with the inclusion of the Antiquities Act in the AGO report," Robertson continued. "While the Administration says in the report that it intends to engage stakeholders through a public and transparent process before setting public lands aside using the Antiquities Act, the recreational fishing community has seen this act used in the past to create the world's largest no-fishing zone in the Pacific Ocean with virtually no public input, and we would not want to see similar decisions made onshore."

Some other specific AGO report elements noted and supported by ASA:

- The establishment of a Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR): ASA looks forward to engaging with this body which will focus on the urgent need to increase access and improve outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Engaging young people in conservation and the outdoors: ASA has long supported educational efforts that get more children outside and aware of conserving America's natural resources. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), strongly supported by ASA, can be a significant partner in following through on this element of AGO.
- Commitment to the Land and Water Conservation Fund: ASA commends the strong commitment to fund in the AGO report.
- Improving access for recreational angling: Access is one of ASA's top organizational priorities. ASA will continue discussions with the Administration on that issue, in particular the specific recommendation in Section Nine to "facilitate recreational access to the nation's waterways."

Robertson concluded, "ASA agrees with the assertions made in the AGO report regarding the importance of public-private partnerships and would welcome the chance to participate in the "Partnership for AGO" described in the report. ASA will continue its discussions with the Administration to ensure that the sportfishing community is well represented throughout the Initiative."

To read more about the Administration's AGO initiative and the final report released this week visit: <http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/>

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[The American Sportfishing Association](#) (ASA) is the sportfishing industry's trade association, committed to looking out for the interests of the entire sportfishing community. We give the industry a unified voice speaking out when emerging laws and policies could significantly affect sportfishing business or sportfishing itself. We invest in long-term ventures to ensure the industry will remain strong and prosperous as well as safeguard and promote the enduring economic and conservation values of sportfishing in America. ASA also gives America's 60 million anglers a voice in policy decisions that affect their ability to sustainably fish on our nation's waterways through KeepAmericaFishing™, our angler advocacy campaign. America's anglers generate over \$45 billion in retail sales with a \$125 billion impact on the nation's economy creating employment for over one million people.

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